

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR CRUZ M. BUSTAMANTE'S



Commission for One California

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report

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LIEUTENANT
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COMMISSION

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ONE
California

**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR CRUZ M. BUSTAMANTE'S
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Photo by Mary Uyematsu Kao, UCLA Asian-American Studies Center

This report is dedicated to the memory of
“Uncle Roy” Morales
1932-2001

DR. ROYAL MORALES was a social worker, community scholar and activist in Los Angeles. He aided troubled youth and taught the *Filipino American Experience* course at UCLA for nearly two decades. His passing is a major loss that will be felt throughout the lives of his family, friends, colleagues, and the communities he served so well. He leaves us with a legacy that we all can honor.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CALIFORNIA is one of the most diverse societies in history. From the time when its Native American tribes first interacted with one another, to the arrival of Spanish missionaries, to the Gold Rush Era that attracted prospectors from the Eastern United States, Asia, Europe and Latin America, our state has been a place where people of different backgrounds, histories, cultures and lifestyles have come together to pursue their dreams. While differences between people have resulted in unfortunate clashes throughout the state's history, for the most part, California has held together remarkably well. We have harnessed the dynamic energy of our diverse population to build California into the fifth largest economy in the world.

Two recent reports point to the challenge and promise embodied by California's growing diversity. Last August, the United States Census Bureau reported that California no longer possessed a majority racial or ethnic group. At the time, Lieutenant Governor Cruz M. Bustamante urged people to see this milestone as a "cause for celebration, not consternation," and to use it as a rallying cry to forge new consensus on common concerns, such as education, public safety and the economy. A few months later, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) issued its report on racial and ethnic attitudes in California. The PPIC report, based on scientific polling, found positive perceptions of race relations among the different racial/ethnic groups, as well as surprising commonalities around public policy priorities.¹

Together, the Census and PPIC reports suggest that California can continue to flourish in the midst of extraordinary diversity, as long as we focus on our common goals: a quality education for every child, safe neighborhoods

where children can play without fear, and jobs that pay a fair wage for every resident who is willing to work hard to contribute to the health of our economy. These are values upon which every Californian can agree, regardless of gender, race, national origin, language, religion, disability, or sexual preference. At the same time, the state must actively combat the forces that seek to distract us from our common mission, divide us across group lines or single out particular groups for discriminatory treatment. The state must promote mutual understanding and appreciation among its different communities and be aggressive in condemning and punishing hate, prejudice and intolerance.

Lieutenant Governor Cruz M. Bustamante recognized the central role that diversity has played in California's history, as well as the continuing role that it holds in shaping the state's culture, politics and economy. He saw a need to institutionalize ongoing dialogue on the state's diversity, to help government, the business community and individual citizens develop solutions for overcoming the hurdles of adjusting to a rapidly changing population. The Lieutenant Governor met with President William Jefferson Clinton in July 1999, about the President's efforts to create a national dialogue on race, through his Initiative on Race and One America. Following that meeting, the Lieutenant Governor created the Commission for One California, a group of state and community leaders from all backgrounds and walks of life, committed to applying their unique expertise to tackling some of the toughest challenges posed by the state's diversity.

The purpose of the Commission is to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers there are to a greater sharing

"we must embrace diversity and see it as a cause for celebration, not consternation"

1. Zoltan Hajnal and Mark Baldassare, *Finding Common Ground: Racial and Ethnic Attitudes in California* (San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California, January 4, 2001).

“Training on diversity is critical to changing behavior and must be built into ... almost every profession”

of a common experience, and to address those barriers through concrete recommendations for action. As we move into the new century, the Golden State continues to stand as a place where dreams can come true. Critical to that image – and our prosperity in the long run – is that we demonstrate that we can all get along, that our state can be a model for others in what is likely to be an integrated, very heterogeneous world. The Lieutenant Governor charged the Commission with the following mission:

- To serve as a forum for dialogue to promote understanding of diversity;
- To disseminate materials about best practices to combat prejudice, ignorance and hate;
- To provide assistance to community leaders and law enforcement agencies in the fight against hate crimes; and
- To advocate and promote a state and national legislative agenda that puts into place the best practices for teaching tolerance and addressing hate crimes.

The Commission is premised on the principle that to function effectively in a diverse and changing environment, people must understand how diversity affects everything that we do, and they must be willing to bring diversity issues into the foreground of discussion. Racism and other forms of discrimination and intolerance are never pleasant topics to discuss, but ignoring their existence and their historical and continuing effects on people and communities only perpetuates inequities. Candid, open dialogue on diversity can highlight problems and pave the way for effective solutions.

Participants and members of the public were grateful that the Commission for One California took on some of the

most challenging and timely issues of diversity in public policy, in search of common ground and solutions. But the Commission is but one example of how organized dialogue can work. There are many viable models for dialogue that should be actively identified and promoted to expand public awareness of issues of diversity through all facets of our society.

General Recommendations

The Commission held four public hearings throughout the state in its first year. Leading experts from academia, government, industry and the community assembled to address issues of diversity in four key areas of society:

1. Media and entertainment;
2. Elementary and secondary education;
3. Racial profiling in law enforcement; and
4. Early childhood care and education.

Although these four substantive topic areas are very different from one another, two crosscutting recommendations emerged from these hearings:

- **Education and training on diversity and American cultures must be universal.** Training on diversity is critical to changing behavior and must be built into the qualification procedures for almost every profession. This is particularly important for professions that involve extensive interaction with members of the general public, such as teaching and policing. In some cases, innocent misunderstandings on the job may result in temporary or even long-term emotional hurt. In other cases, overt discrimination and abuse of power in carrying out one’s duties may have damaging psychological, political and economic repercussions on entire communities. Diversity

training can help prevent an entire range of avoidable offenses.

To be effective, diversity training must meet certain minimum standards of quality, and it must be customized to the needs of its audience. There are no quick fixes to overcome deep-seated prejudices that have developed over the course of a lifetime. High-quality training entails intensive and sustained re-education. The Commission recognizes that each profession faces different problems and therefore requires tailored solutions; but it also believes that there are minimal standards that need to be identified across professional boundaries.

- **Education and training on diversity and American cultures must be continually renewed.** California's population and communities are constantly changing, spurred by factors such as births, employment opportunities, internal migration and immigration. Neighborhoods, classrooms and consumer preferences evolve with these rapidly changing patterns. Therefore, education and training must similarly evolve, and new knowledge about California's people must be disseminated broadly and efficiently through our schools and workplaces to help our children and adult citizens understand and embrace the changes around them. By incorporating ongoing education on diversity into the renewal processes for professional licensing and certification, we can help ensure that our workforce is continuously equipped with an accurate understanding of our changing population.

Specific Recommendations

The following recommendations were made with regard to the specific areas

of focus. Each of these issues was chosen because of its perceived importance to the Commission's mission and its timeliness in terms of having an impact on public policy or public perceptions.

Media and Entertainment

California is the national capital of the entertainment industry. Television, film and other media produced in the state have a towering impact on popular culture here and around the world. The images projected through media and entertainment are as much dream as reality, but they have the power to shape how we think about ourselves, and how others view us. That immense power must be exercised responsibly.

The issues for consideration by the Commission revolved around whose messages are conveyed through entertainment and the media, how those messages impact different populations, and how reflective and representative those messages are of our changing society. Furthermore, the Commission examined issues behind the camera, including diversity in the creative and production processes. The Commission found that although some of television's most popular and critically acclaimed shows employ diverse casts – often through the initiative of individual producers – networks in general are still blind to the need for better representation. Audiences and advertisers have accepted and embraced diversity in entertainment, but the networks and their decision-makers have lagged behind.

The Commission recognizes the right of free speech guaranteed the media and is not seeking to control the message, but rather to encourage the industry to be inclusive of all messages. Along those lines, the Commission recommends

“there are no quick fixes to overcome deep-seated prejudices that have developed over ... a lifetime”

“some of television’s most popular shows employ diverse casts (but) networks ... are still blind to the need for better representation”

the following:

- ***Evaluation of the entertainment industry for diversity by an independent third party, with annual reports sent to the Federal Communications Commission.*** Because it is absolutely inappropriate for the government to regulate media content, the Commission recommends that a coalition of third party organizations, such as civil rights groups, regularly evaluate the entertainment industry and its products. This coalition could issue an annual report card, grading the networks on a range of criteria, such as the diversity of their casts, their sensitivity to diverse issues and their overall hiring practices. Exemplary performance could be singled out for special recognition. This form of regular monitoring and recognition could galvanize public opinion and aid networks in their future decision-making.
- ***Establishment by the federal government, the private sector, and community groups of incentives to encourage greater sensitivity to diversity in the media.*** There is some evidence that the preoccupation of television news media with murder, crime and disaster has a negative effect on the public’s perceptions of our society. It accounts, in part, for increased public concern about crime at a time when crime rates are actually going down. These coverage patterns may also contribute to negative stereo-typing, as viewers generalize the actions of individuals they see on television to entire classes of people. The Federal Communications Commission, which licenses local television stations, could be encouraged to devote more attention to community concerns about the lack of diversity in the media. It could also implement

incentives for television stations to provide more public affairs programming, such as reporting on positive activities within the diverse communities of their local viewing areas. By telling the whole story of these communities, news shows could go a long way toward helping the public understand the true meaning of diversity in California.

Elementary and Secondary Education

California’s population considers education to be one of the most important issues of public policy in the state, according to survey after survey of public opinion. In fact, according to the latest report from the Public Policy Institute of California, this finding is true across every racial/ethnic group in the state. There is little doubt that the state’s future depends on education to build a highly skilled workforce and remain competitive in today’s global economy.

The diversity of the population has an enormous impact on elementary and secondary education. Although California only recently became a state without an ethnic majority, minority groups comprised a majority of students in the state’s public schools since the 1988-89 school year. In 1999-2000, Hispanic students composed 42% of California’s public school enrollment, followed by whites at 37%, and Asians and Pacific Islanders and African Americans at 9% each.² Teaching such a diverse student population poses unique challenges that arise from cultural, linguistic and socio-economic differences. But these are challenges that the state must overcome, because every child who remains uneducated diminishes our economic productivity and sends an employment opportunity to another state or country. While the top priority

for schools is to ensure that every child can achieve high academic standards, schools also play a critical role in socializing our children and educating them about diversity.

On the issue of elementary and secondary education, the Commission recommends the following:

- ***State and local academic standards must reflect our evolving understanding of the histories and cultures that make up California.*** In many cases, the classroom may be the only place other than the media for a young child to gain exposure to knowledge and information on different people and communities. Therefore, it is essential that the academic curriculum is representative of California's extraordinary diversity. The state has embarked upon a long-term reform effort, defining standards for what every child should know, what every teacher should teach, and what should be tested to evaluate and reward performance. Yet educators and students alike decry the state's adopted standards for failing to incorporate diverse perspectives. In our fast-changing world, the absence of current knowledge puts our children at a serious disadvantage.
- ***Training on American cultures and teaching respect for diversity must be a requirement for the certification and re-certification of teachers and administrators.*** Teachers and school administrators represent the front line of education, and their skills and knowledge have a determining effect on how well their students perform. If staff members are unable to relate to their students, if they apply their biases and prejudices in the classroom, or if they cannot defuse intolerance between students, they can do serious damage to their

students' achievement and sense of self-worth. At the same time, schools are microcosms of the larger society, and children learn to relate to one another and to cope with differences through their school experiences. Teachers and school administrators play an important role in modeling proper behavior, teaching respect, and helping regulate their experiences. Updated diversity training, including an understanding of different populations and how to foster tolerance in the classroom, must be a part of every teacher and school administrator's formal preparation for certification, as well as a regular component of in-service professional development and re-certification.

- ***Gather, evaluate, and disseminate best practices in curriculum and training.*** There was broad consensus in the Commission and among the witnesses that we already know what works. The problem is that this valuable information is not finding its way into classrooms. Therefore, a necessary first step should be to gather and evaluate materials that are currently available, and widely advertise and disseminate best practices to school districts through new technologies, such as the Internet. The state could play a key role, for example, by appropriating funds to establish and staff a clearing-house within the Department of Education.
- ***Establish a policy on hate incidents in every school.*** Schools must be prepared to confront and respond to hate. School administrators and teachers need to have a basic understanding of hate crimes and be able to identify early warning signs of potentially destructive behavior. Schools must establish protocols and policies to respond to hate incidents, including detailed tracking

2. California Department of Education, *Enrollment in California Public Schools by Ethnic Designation, 1981-82 through 1999-00*. <http://cde.ca.gov/demographics/reports/statewide/ethstud.htm>

of data on such incidents.

- ***In the University of California and the California State University systems, develop and require students to take a course on California's diversity.***

It is almost inconceivable that children growing up in California today will not interact with people of many different backgrounds in their adult lives. Attitudes are based on understanding and the state, to the best of its ability, should be obligated to prepare its residents for the complex society in which they will live. To the extent that students fail to receive this vital preparation in their elementary and secondary experiences, the state's higher education system should attempt to correct the problem by establishing a system-wide policy, such as the "American Cultures" course requirement at UC Berkeley, which includes a consideration of diversity from many academic disciplines.

Early Childhood Development and Education

Attitudes about others start early. We do not entirely understand what enables some children to grow up into empathetic, compassionate adults and others into bigots, but surely the experiences of early childhood are pivotal. Given the rapidly increasing interest in early childhood development and education, as evidenced by the passage of Proposition 10, which provides more than \$700 million per year for early childhood programs, it seemed an appropriate subject for Commission attention. To underscore the importance of teaching respect at the earliest age, in September 1999, the Lieutenant Governor initiated a partnership with the California Children and Families Commission (created by Proposition 10) by

attending the inaugural meeting of that commission's Advisory Committee on Diversity. He called for continuing dialogue between the Children and Families Commission and the Commission for One California on issues of diversity and tolerance in early childhood.

In the Commission for One California hearing on early childhood, we learned how recent research has demonstrated the importance of the early years in a child's emotional, physical and cognitive development, but also that these years are crucial in shaping a child's attitudes toward diversity. Young children apparently begin to acquire stereotypes about differences at an early age. Children are not born hating; it is a learned behavior. By intervening early with children, parents and professionals can help them understand our increasingly diverse and multicultural state, and potentially prevent prejudices from taking hold and causing greater problems later in life. Therefore, the Commission makes the following recommendations:

- ***Require diversity training in the licensing process of child care workers.*** Public school teachers receive diversity training as part of their certification process, but there is no such requirement of early childhood educators and child care workers. To be licensed to work in a child care center, a teacher must take only 12 units in early childhood education. While recognizing the scarcity of such workers and the problems of recruiting capable and talented people, the Commission recommends infusing standardized diversity training into the education of early childhood professionals. By incorporating such training into the licensing process, we can help ensure that child care workers are culturally

sensitive and are equipped with the knowledge and skills to promote the development of more empathetic attitudes in young children.

- **Establish guidelines on diversity in early childhood programs and disseminate best practices through the California Children and Families Commission.** There are some fine examples of how to teach diversity and understanding to young children, but these resources have not been fully marketed or utilized. Since the field of early childhood development is largely unregulated in comparison to K-12 and higher education, the state should provide model standards for what early childhood educators should teach to young children with respect to diversity. These standards should strive to help children to understand the world around them and to respect human differences. At the same time, the state should create a central clearing-house to help providers gain access to the best information on teaching respect through early childhood education.
- **Support new research on diversity in early childhood.** We are only beginning to understand how the early years of a child's life influence how they cope with human difference throughout their lives. The state should therefore encourage new research into this area. The California Children and Families Commission and its county affiliates are a new and impressive resource for research funding, and an excellent vehicle for disseminating findings to grass-roots providers.

Racial Profiling in Law Enforcement

There is no issue with which the Commission dealt in its first year that

was as controversial as the question of racial profiling in law enforcement, in particular, the practice of singling out African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Latinos, and Native Americans for traffic stops. Racial profiling touches us in many ways beyond policing, but the catalyst for the Commission's hearing was the introduction of legislation by Senator Kevin Murray to prevent the phenomena of "driving while black" and "driving while brown." While racial profiling legislation was eventually passed and signed by the Governor, there was a strong sense among Commission members that not enough was being done to bring together affected communities and police departments to develop mutually agreeable solutions to this contentious issue. This was especially evident in the widely varying interpretations and reactions to the recent release of voluntarily collected racial data on traffic stops by the California Highway Patrol. To address the issue of racial profiling, the Commission recommends the following:

- **Establish a Data Collection and Analysis Commission.** While 55 law enforcement agencies in California currently collect racial profiling data on a voluntary basis, these data are not standardized, nor is there a process or vehicle for objectively analyzing and interpreting the data to inform California policy makers. The Commission for One California recommends creating an independent commission to:
 1. Promulgate uniform standards for data collection;
 2. Conduct nonpartisan, objective analysis of data;
 3. Provide technical assistance to local communities to respond to findings; and

“there are some fine examples of how to teach diversity and understanding to young children, but these resources have not been fully marketed or utilized ...”

4. Implement a research program on the causes of and solutions to racial profiling.

The Data Collection and Analysis Commission would be composed of police chiefs, leaders from community and civil rights organizations, scholars and other key stakeholders, such as representatives from police unions. It could serve as a model for engaging all stakeholders in the objective resolution of an often heated and contentious issue.

- ***Institute more courses on diversity awareness for both new recruits and current officers.*** The state recently instituted enhancements to the level and frequency of diversity training received by police officers, and the Commission would like to underscore the importance of this training. It is particularly important

for members of the local community to have substantive input into the training of officers who serve in those communities, to ensure sensitivity to the unique populations and circumstances there. In addition, because 50% of California's police officers are trained at community colleges, the Commission wants to go on record as supporting such diversity courses at these state-supported institutions.

- ***Screen prospective officers for bias.*** State law requires that every peace officer pass a psychological examination as a part of the hiring process. The state should investigate ways to identify discriminatory beliefs through such tests as a preventive measure.



INTRODUCTION

CALIFORNIA has always stood for the realization of dreams. In a great many ways it still does. The climate and the extraordinary beauty of the land are a constant draw. We have the fifth largest economy in the world, with major technology, entertainment, manufacturing, and agricultural exports to the rest of the nation and the world. But the greatest attraction is the dream of being able to achieve anything. It is the American belief in individual freedom carried

to its farthest reach.

The California dream has direct antecedents in the Gold Rush more than 150 years ago. According to historian and Commission member Kevin Starr, the Gold Rush “was an intrinsically internationalist event ... [representing] the most extensive and intensive multi-ethnic, multi-cultural encounter thus far experienced by Anglo Americans.”

From Mexico and Chile came skilled miners who imparted the technology of mining to Anglo-American miners from the eastern states. Thousands of miners came from France and Germany, countries destabilized by the revolutions of 1848. Slowly at first but then with growing numbers came the Chinese, both to work in the mines and later to achieve the heroic work of spanning the Sierra Nevada with the railroad track...

In the post-Gold Rush era, California further diversified itself. Throughout the 1850s and '60s, numerous Irish immigrants migrated to the state via New York. Anglo-Americans and the Midwest flocked into Southern California in the 1880s. In the 1890s, Mexicans migrated into Southern California to build the rail lines for the big Red Cars. Starting in 1898 and rising steadily thereafter was an influx of Japanese immigrants, a population which grew even more rapidly after the arrival of thousands of Japanese picture brides in the 1920s. Other turn of the century immigrant groups included the Italians, Germans, Swedes, and Dalmatians, who poured steadily into the state, and especially the Bay Area, in the 1885-1920 era. The 1920s also witnessed a second influx of Mexicans into the fields of California where they joined the Filipinos, the Japanese, the Sikhs and other people already working there. Armenians meanwhile, fleeing the persecutions in Europe, were settling in the Great Central Valley...

This then – diversity – is the persistent DNA code of California. It goes without saying that all of these groups were not treated fairly when they arrived or even long after they settled here. But even as we focus upon the injustices and mistreatment, the insensitivities and outright racism, we must keep in mind some simple points: California has always been diverse, no one group has ever driven another group out of California, although many of them have tried.³

California is now so diverse that there is no longer a majority population in the state. The white population has fallen below 50%, the Latino population – predicted to grow the fastest – will not exceed 50% for some years. The fact that the state attracts people from so many different cultures requires us to consider the implications

of diversity in the emergence of one society, and that is the purpose of this Commission.

Most Californians recognize the dramatic demographic changes and believe that race and ethnicity matter very little, if at all. We know that most of us value our diversity, viewing it as one of our



The Honorable Cruz M. Bustamante, Lieutenant Governor of California, chairs the Commission for One California

3. State Librarian Kevin Starr. Remarks delivered to the Commission on September 28, 1999 at the Museum of Tolerance, Los Angeles.

*California has become
the window on America
for the rest of the world*

greatest assets in a world where nations are increasingly complicated by heterogeneity, where there was once only homogeneity. We share a surprisingly common vision of the future. It is a future that is expected to include peaceful and improved race relations. It is a remarkable attitude and demonstrates the great optimism upon which all dreams must rely. While America has always espoused equality and freedom of opportunity, it has rarely lived up to that ideal quite as firmly as California now seems prepared to do.

According to the PPIC report, we share a common understanding of the problems we face (education, crime, and jobs), but we differ in how we would choose to address them. The role of policy-makers will be to recognize the differences and build on the commonalities. Good public policy should be responsive to those areas where something can be done to facilitate unity. Whatever the future holds, there needs to be an equitable distribution of public goods and services; and we need to ensure that every child – no matter their background – is given a fair opportunity to attain his or her own dreams. That, particularly, is a promise that cannot wait.

While California has always had a changing population, the need to consider what diversity means for us goes beyond the past, although it has strong ties to it. It goes well beyond the issues that historically divided the state: questions of water and its use for agriculture or urban populations or conflicts over population growth, even within urban and suburban areas. This is something new. The world is both larger and at the same time smaller than it has ever been. Immigrants come here, as they did at the turn of the last century, but they may not lose their ties to their homelands in quite

the same way because of telephones and email, and because airlines bring us closer together at a much faster pace. It matters that today's immigrant can return to his or her homeland for a visit in a matter of hours, or talk to his or her mother every week.

It may also matter that California is developing into a society with a different racial and ethnic mix than America saw before we closed our borders in the 1920s. There may be some consequences to the larger society in the values about community that these new populations bring. Our history and experience since the 1920s has given us a different view of what it means to be equal than our ancestors held. Opinion polls have shown that after the lessons of World War II and the Civil Rights Movement, we believe more strongly than ever in equality of opportunity for everyone.

California's promise must be met with attention and sensitivity to the differences, as well as the commonalities between us. Even before the advent of film and television, California was the Golden Mountain dreamt of by people far away from our shores. Since then, the state has become the window on America for the rest of the world. The pictures we send by satellite around the world tell stories of who we are and how we interact with each other. They show the best and the worst, and the stories they tell may well have an impact not only on our future here, but on the lives of millions of other people who see themselves in us. Our economic ties abroad are obviously at issue, but so, too, are more intangible factors about democracy and the capacity of human beings to live together.

Even though we know that the overwhelming majority of the state's population supports the goal of equal

opportunity, achieving the goal will not come without stress and possibly conflict. Striving for the best, we are also mindful of the thin undercurrent of hatred and fear, and crimes against strangers and those who are “different.” There are unintentional patterns of discrimination that come from ignorance and insensitivity. None of us are entirely immune to stereotypes when we think of others. Whatever the cause, discrimination toward any group is not acceptable. It threatens all of us as we move into the new century.

At the same time, there is also growing recognition that the strength of the state as the window on America is, indeed, the strength of our diversity.

California sits on the edge of one continent as the link between East and West. The border with Mexico is the gateway to Latin America. The population represents just about every nation on earth. At a time of increasing globalization, it is critical to all of us that we not only learn to live together in peace, but that we demonstrate our commitment to that goal to the rest of the world. It is not an easy goal, but despite the thread of ignorance, fear and hatred that seems to lurk on the fringe of society, there is a strong commitment among most of the population to take the next step.



DATE AND PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN. Chinese- and Anglo-American settlers working in the California gold fields. Photograph courtesy California Department of Water Resources

THE FIRST YEAR

In the first year, the Commission met six times throughout the state to define its mission and hold hearings on various issues of importance and concern. It was a time to learn from the expertise and experience among the Commissioners and others about the issues. Given the mandate, it was also a time to explore what a group like this might accomplish with the leadership and support of Lieutenant Governor Cruz M. Bustamante.

The Commission focused its deliberations on the media, education and the development of attitudes of empathy in young children, and racial profiling. Each issue was viewed as an opportunity

to bring public attention to the subject, to highlight effective efforts to deal with it, and to consider what role government might play. Throughout, there was concern by Commission members that the nature of diversity itself be explored. It is not a simple subject. While there is hope that we can develop an easy, comprehensive definition, it is likely that the words will come only after much more learning.

The following pages are a brief recap of what transpired, including recommendations that followed each of the Commission hearings.



A respect for and appreciation of diversity – in race, religion, appearance, physical ability or any other measurable aspect of humanity – is learned and not inherent.

THE FIRST YEAR: MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

THE first Commission meeting occurred on September 28, 1999 at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. The subject was *Diversity in the Entertainment Industry*. The issue that prompted the hearing was the absence of minority representation in the new television shows planned for the coming season. The situation received considerable attention over the summer as a number of civil rights groups mounted a national campaign about the choice of the television networks to introduce 26 new programs without a single minority cast member.

In the course of the campaign, it became clear that the lack of diversity – both before and behind the cameras – was a serious omission, if not of intent, at least of neglect. Those who were represented on television tended to be seen in stereotypical ways, often negatively. The impact of American television at home and abroad is enormous. The impact of this lack of sensitivity on the millions of Americans who were ignored by this action said a great deal about who we are as a society, and where we think we are going – or, at least, where those who control our image of ourselves think we are going.

While the First Amendment is perhaps the most essential freedom under the US Constitution, there is a moral – if not a civil – imperative to reflect all of our citizens and all of our society in our entertainment industry. For good or ill, television and film – and all the rest of our modern cultural vehicles, from video games to the Internet – are among the most influential mechanisms in our society for telling us who we are. They dramatize our fears and our dreams. Ignoring the reality of life for those who are not part of the majority is painful and exclusionary. Ignoring the reality of diversity is misleading to all of those who would see our society

in our media, and has the potential of causing great harm by projecting an image of homogeneity that will not be met.

The Commission for One California took the opportunity to learn about the reasons that led to this turn of events at its first meeting, and to talk to some of those who had influence in the media. The attention brought to the issue had an impact, and the shows that eventually went on the air reflected more of our diversity than originally expected. Still, there are factors that need to be understood and opportunities to help the media become more sensitive that need to be explored.

The speakers at the hearing included the following:

- Greg Baxton, Staff Writer, *LA Times*
- Richard Masur, President, Screen Actors Guild
- Jesus Salvador Trevino, Writer/Director
- Lois Salisbury, President, Children Now
- Zara Buggs Taylor, Executive Administrator for Employment Diversity, Writers Guild of America
- Jeff Valdez, Writer/Producer
- Anne Marie Johnson, Actress
- Rich Mater, Senior Vice President of Broadcast Standards, WB Television Network

Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante opened the meeting by noting that “how diversity is portrayed in the media plays an important role in how we look at one another, how we treat one another, and how we live together.” The question he put before the Commission was whether television audiences – especially children – are being polarized by programming and,



The presence and portrayal of ethnic minorities on commercial television has been and continues to be completely disproportionate to the size of their population(s) within the larger society.

“in turn, whether [the television industry was] unwittingly contributing to intolerance.” The purpose of the meeting was to begin a dialogue about how the entertainment industry might create positive role models for Californians, especially our youth.

The testimony taken during the day recognized the problem, but differed in explaining it and, to some extent, in the recommendations. According to Mr. Braxton, of the 26 new comedies and dramas premiering on the four major networks, not one included a minority person in a leading role. It was a step back from the year before, and – as it happened – was somewhat corrected as the season wore on.

But the issue comes out of a structure that makes sensitivity to the needs of minorities difficult to realize. As was pointed out during the meeting, similar groups have met before with network executives, but none of the executives held to account before hold those positions today. The turnover in the industry is so high that there is no “institutional memory.” Although incumbent executives work to reflect the current culture and population as they know it, their vision as implemented can be overwhelmingly lacking in diversity. Ironically, television ads are far more apt to reflect the diversity of the population because they are market driven. The tendency to reflect one’s own experience – while artistically valid – has repercussions in a diverse society.

Participants on the panels pointed to the following issues:

Market Factors

- The networks blame the advertisers for pursuing a young and affluent audience, which is interpreted to mean young, affluent whites and those who want to be seen as young

and affluent.

- There is a belief that Spanish speakers, in particular, pay more attention to their own language media and, therefore, do not have to be addressed in the mainstream media. Because of that, they seek to reach this growing minority through Spanish language programming, even though most Spanish speakers watch television in both languages.

Structural Factors

- By far, the majority of the population of those who produce our entertainment are under 35, white and male. Most of them think of diversity in the context of a white/black paradigm because that is what they were taught when they were in school.
- Even if they knew how to portray others, there is a fear of “getting it wrong.”
- The issue is rarely addressed at the beginning of the creative process when it would have the greatest impact among the writers and producers because most of the attention that is brought to bear is focused on the networks that enter at the “tail end of the process, after the shows have been produced and choices are made as to which shows to air.”

Consequences

- The absence of models of people “like me” for so large a portion of the young population will have an impact on how they see themselves and how they view one another. Positive role models could play an especially significant role for the young, but they tend to be few and far between.
- African Americans and Latinos buy almost 30% of movie tickets. The film industry is missing that market.

- There is some sympathy in the entertainment industry about the issue of diversity, but not enough influence – or ability to exercise it – to overcome the perceived economic factors.

Conclusions

Mindful of the protections of free speech, but recognizing the concerns of many – both inside and outside of the industry – to be more sensitive to the needs of a diverse society, the Commission made the following recommendations:

- ***Evaluation of the entertainment industry for diversity by an independent third party, with annual reports sent to the Federal Communications Commission.*** Because it is absolutely inappropriate for the government to regulate media content, the Commission recommends that a coalition of third party organizations, such as civil rights groups, regularly evaluate the entertainment industry and its products. This coalition could issue an annual report card, grading the networks on a range of criteria, such as the diversity of their casts, their sensitivity to diverse issues and their overall hiring practices. Exemplary performance could be singled out for special recognition. This form of regular monitoring and recognition could galvanize public opinion and aid networks in their future decision-making.
- ***Establishment by the federal government, the private sector, and community groups of incentives to encourage greater sensitivity to diversity in the media.*** There is some evidence that the pre-occupation of television news media with murder, crime and disaster has a negative effect on the public's

perceptions of our society. It accounts, in part, for increased public concern about crime at a time when crime rates are actually going down. These coverage patterns may also contribute to negative stereotyping, as viewers generalize the actions of individuals they see on television to entire classes of people. The Federal Communications Commission, which licenses local television stations, could be encouraged to devote more attention to community concerns about the lack of diversity in the media. It could also implement incentives for television stations to provide more public affairs programming, such as reporting on positive activities within the diverse communities of their local viewing areas. By telling the whole story of these communities, news shows could go a long way toward helping the public understand the true meaning of diversity in California.

While the discussion with industry executives and critics was illuminating for the Commission, the question of what to do about it was just as complex. This is an important issue, but it does not enable the government to lightly cross over the First Amendment right of free speech to tell others what to say or how to say it. Bringing attention, and giving a platform to those voices that are excluded may be one of the strongest steps that can be taken.

While the Commission does not have the staff to monitor the industry itself, it can encourage others to do so and report on what they find. This is particularly important for community groups that need a platform to present their findings. The idea of an independent industry monitor is not new; the industry has instituted

monitors of its own over other issues, such as ratings. Nor is looking at issues of representation of minorities new. But the concern of this Commission is the representation of diversity itself.



The accurate and fair presentation of California's diverse population in commercial media continues to be one of the Commission's foremost goals.

THE FIRST YEAR: ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE Commission met on January 19, 2000 at the Union Bank of California in San Francisco on the subject of “Leadership for Change: Diversity and Tolerance in Our Schools.” Education is one of the most important issues California faces, according to the PPIC study. It has been at the top of the list of public concerns for some time. What is interesting and especially compelling for this Commission, however, is that every ethnic group polled in the state listed it as their first concern by overwhelming majorities.⁴

A half century ago, California committed itself to creating the best public education system in the nation. Its K-12 and higher education institutions were looked to and emulated throughout the country, and it was a major draw for the immigrants who came here from around the world. The quality and availability of education are key to the success promised by the American dream. Over the years, the commitment faded. Proposition 13, which passed in 1978, shifted the funding mechanisms for education, and over time the state found itself ranked near the bottom in school spending. The population changed and while the need for new schools, more teachers and better instruction grew, California’s educational system was stretched beyond its capacities. There is no time in American history when the state of the educational system would not have mattered. But in today’s technology and information-driven world, the serious division between those at the top and those at the bottom of the economic ladder makes educational opportunity matter more than ever. This division is more pronounced in California than elsewhere in the nation.⁵

A complicating factor in California’s education is not just the lack of

available resources, but the changing nature of the school population. There are more than 100 languages spoken in our schools. There are differences in the educational opportunities available in the lands from which many immigrants come, which means that many do not have the backgrounds to help their children with their education beyond providing moral support. There is the overcrowding that is somewhat alleviated by recent legislation requiring smaller class sizes. And in the cities – despite the passage of both initiatives and legislation providing more funds for school construction – there is the difficulty of finding appropriate land on which to build new schools. The stress on the educational system has been tremendous, and it has not performed well under the pressure.

For this Commission – interested in how we live together as a diverse society – the stress on the educational system has been even further compounded by weak support for understanding just what this diversity means for our children and our society. The speakers at this session included UC Berkeley Professors Pedro Noguera and David Roche. There were also two panels, one of students from Bay Area schools, and the other of educators and resource group representatives discussing their experience with diversity and tolerance issues in schools.

Professor Noguera expressed concern about the fact that the increase in racial and ethnic diversity is seen as a problem – or even a threat – across the United States. The arrival of new groups often leads to racial conflict and the venting of prejudice, usually because those receiving the new arrivals feel threatened and insecure. Because of the nature of settlement, American schools have seen cultural assimilation of immigrants and non-

4. Hajnal and Baldassare.

5. Stanford Jacoby and Pete Goldschmidt, *Education, Skill and Wage Inequality*, in *California Policy Options*, p. 60 (Los Angeles: UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research, 1998).

whites as central to their mission. In the process, cultural differences were equated with cultural inferiority. Given our history, it is not surprising that diversity would be treated as a problem by many educators and communities – despite expectations of future growth and diversity. Treating diversity as an asset, on the other hand, would enable society to benefit from our pluralism. The key is to be honest with children and to address issues directly.

The Student Panel

- Rachel Bolden-Kramer, a sophomore at San Francisco's Mission Hill High School and a member of the San Francisco Youth Commission
- Richard Hargraves, a senior at San Francisco's Balboa High School and president of the School's gang prevention program, United Playaz
- Horacio Lopez, a senior at San Francisco's Balboa High School and head sergeant of United Playaz.
- Latifa Muhammad, a junior at Middle College High School in Richmond and a reporter for Youth Radio in Berkeley.

The panel made the following points:

- There is a need for a more diverse curriculum, including history books that tell the story of all groups and cultures.
- There should be both state and individual school support for quality student programs that deal with diversity.
- There is a need for more positive role models for students in the schools, including teachers who share a common heritage with their students.
- Inequality between schools is unacceptable and every effort should be made to overcome it.

- In today's school environment, there is a greater need for more counselors and conflict mediators than security guards.

Educators and Resource Representative Panel

- Rudy Corpuz, Jr., a gang prevention counselor at San Francisco's Balboa High School and founder of United Playaz.
- Peter Hippard, a fourth-grade teacher at San Francisco's Clarendon Alternative Elementary School, who attended the Simon Wiesenthal Center's teacher training institute last summer.
- Dr. Mary Marin, principal at San Francisco's Longfellow Elementary School, who did her dissertation on diversity and intercultural relations and is using the National Council of Community and Justice's Different and the Same Program for the last three years.
- Loren Needle, executive director of Peer Resources of San Francisco, which coordinates programs that train students and teachers in conflict mediation.
- Rosalie Pinkert is a resource specialist and teacher at Modesto's Beyer High School and teaches a human relations class.

The panel made the following points:

- There is a need for dedicated, qualified teachers who know how to teach and interact with students.
- Salaries need to be raised to attract qualified people into the teaching profession and to retain those already teaching.
- There is insufficient funding for worthwhile school programs.
- There is a great need for the dissemination of information about

effective programs and resources for educators.

- Diversity and tolerance training should be incorporated into existing curriculum.
- School officials should make an effort to enlist the help of the media, the business community, and law enforcement officials to promote diversity and tolerance in schools.
- There is a need for more positive role models for students.
- The current school curriculum is inadequate in dealing with diversity. History books, for example, should tell the story of all groups and cultures.

Conclusions

The Lieutenant Governor and the Commission expressed concerns about the issues raised and wanted to pursue meetings with state education officials and legislative leaders to develop and implement a school curriculum that would address issues of intolerance and diversity.

The theme of curriculum development on diversity and on-going training of those who deliver services – as noted earlier – recurred in all of the Commission hearings no matter what the topic. With regard to our public education system, the following recommendations were made:

- ***State and local academic standards must reflect our evolving understanding of the histories and cultures that make up California.*** In many cases, the classroom may be the only place other than the media for a young child to gain exposure to knowledge and information on different people and communities. Therefore, it is essential that the academic curriculum is represen-

tative of California's extraordinary diversity. The state has embarked upon a long-term reform effort, defining standards for what every child should know, what every teacher should teach, and what should be tested to evaluate and reward performance. Yet educators and students alike decry the state's adopted standards for failing to incorporate diverse perspectives. In our fast-changing world, the absence of current knowledge puts our children at a serious disadvantage.

- ***Training on American cultures and teaching respect for diversity must be a requirement for the certification and re-certification of teachers and administrators.*** Teachers and school administrators represent the front line of education, and their skills and knowledge have a determining effect on how well their students perform. If staff members are unable to relate to their students, if they apply their biases and prejudices in the classroom, or if they cannot defuse intolerance between students, they can do serious damage to their students' achievement and sense of self-worth. At the same time, schools are microcosms of larger society, and children learn to relate to one another and to cope with differences through their school experiences. Teachers and school administrators play an important role in modeling proper behavior, teaching respect, and helping regulate their experiences. Updated diversity training, including an understanding of different populations and how to foster tolerance in the classroom, must be a part of every teacher and school administrator's formal preparation for certification, as well as a regular component of in-service professional development and recertification.

a necessary first step should be to gather and evaluate materials that are currently available ... and (establishing) a clearinghouse within the Department of Education

- ***Gather, evaluate, and disseminate best practices in curriculum and training.*** There was broad consensus in the Commission and among the witnesses that we already know what works. The problem is that this valuable information is not finding its way into classrooms. Therefore, a necessary first step should be to gather and evaluate materials that are currently available, and widely advertise and disseminate best practices to school districts through new technologies, such as the internet. The state could play a key role, for example, by appropriating funds to establish and staff a clearinghouse within the Department of Education.
- ***Establish a policy on hate incidents in every school.*** Schools must be prepared to confront and respond to hate. School administrators and teachers need to have a basic understanding of hate crimes and be able to identify early warning signs of potentially destructive behavior. Schools must establish protocols and policies to respond to hate incidents,

including detailed tracking of data on such incidents.

- ***In the University of California and the California State University systems, develop and require students to take a course on California's diversity.*** It is almost inconceivable that children growing up in California today will not interact with people of many different backgrounds in their adult lives. Attitudes are based on understanding and the state, to the best of its ability, should be obligated to prepare its residents for the complex society in which they will live. To the extent that students fail to receive this vital preparation in their elementary and secondary experiences, the state's higher education system should attempt to correct the problem by establishing a system-wide policy, such as the "American Cultures" course requirement at UC Berkeley, which includes a consideration of diversity from many academic disciplines.



New certification standards for teachers will ensure that they are able to combat prejudice and discrimination before they become ingrained.



ONE of the conundrums of overcoming discrimination and hatred toward those not like us is understanding where hate comes from. We assume children are raised with the attitudes of their parents, and that their views of the world are set at a very early age. In truth, we know very little about the complicated process of becoming a sensitive and caring human being. There have been studies over the years about hate, but we need to learn more. We need to understand what very young children understand and how they come to develop attitudes about those who are not like themselves.

The California Children and Families Commission represents a new interest in the area of young children and brings new resources with it. Proposition 10 was passed by California voters in November of 1998. It created state and county commissions to provide information and materials, and to formulate guidelines for the establishment of the comprehensive study of early childhood development. Prop 10 gives a broad mandate to both the state and county commissions, using funds generated by a 50¢ surtax on cigarettes and a tax increase on other tobacco products. Twenty percent of the new revenue is to be used at the state level by the California Children and Families Commission, with the remainder left to the county commissions. The revenues generated were estimated to be about \$750 million in 1999-00, declining marginally thereafter as the number of smokers in the state is expected to decline.

Given the shared interests of both Commissions, a meeting was held in Los Angeles at the Islamic Center on September 21, 2000, to explore the development of attitudes toward diversity in the very young and

consider how the two commissions might work together. A week before the Commission hearing, Lieutenant Governor Cruz M. Bustamante addressed the first meeting of the Diversity Committee of the Children and Families Commission in Sacramento, paving the way for close cooperation between these two bodies. The Commission for One California's interest in the Prop 10 commissions was twofold: their mandate clearly touches on the issues of how children learn to be empathetic to others and responsive to living in a diverse society; and it brings fresh resources to a new field, opening opportunities that are not available elsewhere.

Welcoming and research speakers included the following:

- The Honorable Gloria Molina, Chair, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
- Maha ElGenaidi, Member, Commission for One California
- Salam Al-Marayati, Executive Director, Muslim Public Affairs Center
- Dr. Maher Hathout, for the Islamic Center of Southern California
- Dr. Rosa Solorio, MD, MPH, Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Family Medicine, University of California at Los Angeles
- Dr. Lynne C. Huffman, Assistant Professor, School of Medicine, Stanford University
- Dr. Neal Kaufman, Vice Chair, Los Angeles County Proposition 10 Commission

The panel on Solutions and Best Practices included the following:

- Julie Olsen Edwards, Director, Early Childhood Education Department, Cabrillo College

- Elizabeth Martinez, Teacher, Edison Language Academy, Santa Monica
- Dora Pulido Tobiassen, Project Director, California Tomorrow
- Karen Robinson, Director, Wagner Child Care Center, Placentia-Yorba Unified School District
- Carlene Davis, Member, Advisory Committee on Diversity, California Children and Families Commission

Among the points made by the researchers were the following:

- There is very little information about how children see race, especially compared to our growing understanding about developmental skills in general.
- There is a belief that children come to understand race in stages, and that identifying people of a different color and developing attitudes about them are two different processes.
- Anecdotal evidence from early trials suggests that intervention can positively influence how young children relate to difference and diversity, but further scientific study into this emerging field is needed to fully evaluate its effectiveness.
- While the brain develops throughout our lives, it changes most in the first three to five years when personality is set, including how we handle stress and relate to other people.

The Prop 10 commissions – both statewide and in each of the counties – have a great opportunity to advance our knowledge of how we develop empathy for others. Dr. Neil Kaufman spoke about the role these commissions might play:

- The commissions can promote public information on what we need to know and how children learn.

- By creating community-based programs that serve diverse populations within a single site, local Prop 10 commissions can help better integrate their services and reach a broader clientele.
- The Prop 10 commissions have the capacity to provide incentives to child care and faith-based organizations to encourage diverse enrollment and diversity-sensitive education.
- Convening others to develop comprehensive strategies in their communities may be a critical leadership role that only the Prop 10 commissions can play.
- Prop 10 commissions can help develop and encourage the use of curricula designed to help teachers and children to become more understanding of differences.

The practitioners expressed a different experience, noting that children are more aware of racial differences at an earlier age than the research indicated. As one expert noted, “children are reporting what they see and what they hear. They are not racist, but they can become so.” The concerns they expressed included the following:

- The need to promote an appreciation of differences, value them and enhance them.
- The need to focus on our similarities: e.g., everyone eats – how do they do it?
- The goal is to raise “bicultural children” both within the home and within the larger culture: children who recognize that they belong to more than one culture.
- The need to ask questions about what the important values are at home and for the community.

- Encouraging children to stand up for themselves, speaking out when they see that something is wrong.
- Encouraging empathy: “How do you think the bears felt about Goldilocks?” (Seeing things from a different perspective.)
- Recognizing the difference between feelings and actions – when they start believing that they cannot control their feelings, and why they should control their actions.

Conclusions

The significance of the discussion with the Commission emphasized the views expressed at the earlier meeting on education: there is a need to continually educate ourselves; and there is a need to specifically educate our teachers and child care workers about diversity. The Commission made the following recommendations:

- **Require diversity training in the licensing process of child care workers.** Public school teachers receive diversity training as part of their certification process, but there is no such requirement of early childhood educators and child care workers. To be licensed to work in a childcare center, a teacher must take only 12 units in early childhood education. While recognizing the scarcity of such workers and the problems of recruiting capable and talented people, the Commission recommends infusing standardized diversity training into the education of early childhood professionals. By incorporating such training into the licensing process, we can help ensure that child care workers are culturally sensitive and are equipped with the knowledge and skills to promote the development of more

empathetic attitudes in young children.

- **Establish guidelines on diversity in early childhood programs and disseminate best practices through the California Children and Families Commission.** There are some fine examples of how to teach diversity and understanding to young children, but these resources have not been fully marketed or utilized. Since the field of early childhood development is largely unregulated in comparison to K-12 and higher education, the state should provide model standards for what early childhood educators should teach to young children with respect to diversity. These standards should strive to help children to understand the world around them and to respect human differences. At the same time, the state should create a central clearinghouse to help providers gain access to the best information on teaching respect through early childhood education.
- **Support new research on diversity in early childhood.** We are only beginning to understand how the early years of a child’s life influence how they cope with human difference throughout their lives. The state should therefore encourage new research into this area. The California Children and Families Commission and its county affiliates are a new and impressive resource for research funding, and an excellent vehicle for disseminating findings to grassroots providers.



THE FIRST YEAR: RACIAL PROFILING IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

THE Commission met in San Diego at the University of California on May 25, 2000 on the subject of racial profiling, a very controversial and – at the time – unresolved issue in the state Legislature. The issue has broad ramifications for a diverse society, but the specific focus of this meeting was about the police and the stereotyping that leads to the stopping of African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Latinos, and Native Americans for “driving while black,” or “driving while brown.” There is no clearer measure of who is considered a member of society and who is considered a danger than this. And there is no clearer responsibility of a democratic government than to assure equality. Still, it is a complex problem that requires sensitivity and sophistication on all sides to address.

The meeting was called in the context of Senate Bill 1102, sponsored by Senator Kevin Murray from Los Angeles, and subsequently signed into law on September 24, 2000 by Governor Gray Davis. The law contains the following provisions:

- Prohibits racial profiling by law enforcement officers.
- Requires the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training to provide diversity training to all law enforcement officers in the state. Officers must take a refresher course every five years.
- Requires the Legislative Analyst to conduct a study of data collected voluntarily by local law enforcement agencies, to determine the incidence of racial profiling, and whether data collection and training are effective in preventing it. The report is due in July 2002.

Testimony during the day revealed the

need for officer training, greater sensitivity and testing of sensitivity levels in prospective police cadets on diversity, as well as continual training for supervisory personnel. But the biggest issue before the Commission in May – when the proposed legislation was still in a very controversial state – was whether or not data collection should be a requirement. Senator Murray had introduced a similar bill the previous year that was vetoed by the Governor because of the data collection requirement. The revised bill – without data collection – was opposed by many civil rights organizations, including the ACLU and the NAACP, both of which were represented on the panels.

The Commission hearing was addressed by Dr. Robert Klitgaard, Dean of the Rand Graduate School, who made the following points:

- Racial profiling is the use of race as a variable in an equation. There are examples of bad uses, such as redlining, or arguably good uses, such as affirmative action in university admissions.
- Racial profiling is not about disparate outcomes. Disparate outcomes can be explained by factors other than racism.
- Some criticisms of racial profiling in law enforcement include its arbitrariness and lack of systematic application by some officers and not by others, its statistical inefficiency that causes the stopping of too many innocent people, its high social costs and stigma, and its fundamental immorality.
- We need to weigh the costs and benefits of its use and consider whether there are situations where it is worthwhile in terms of reduced crime, and identify those in which it is not.

- Forbidding the practice of racial profiling is not enough because it is rarely a formal practice to begin with.
- If data is collected, there must be a clear purpose for collecting it and a plan for using it.
- We need to find what the incentives and rewards are that drive perpetrators of this behavior. We need to work with police departments to see if we can change those rewards. The system must be repaired.

Others addressing the Commission included:

- Michelle Alexander, NAACP
- Assistant Chief Rulette Armstead, San Diego Police Department
- Officer Robert Burks, California Highway Patrol
- Chief Gary Creason, Southwestern College
- Captain Ronald Davis, Oakland Police Department
- Commissioner “Spike” Helmik, California Highway Patrol
- Sonny Lee, Museum of Tolerance
- Thomas Saenz, Mexican American Legal Defense Fund
- Chief Arturo Venegas, Jr., Sacramento Police Department
- Geraldine Washington, Los Angeles NAACP

The panelists and the discussion that followed were thoughtful, passionate and sensitive to the implications for both communities of color and policing. The clear thrust of those who spoke was for the collection of data as an essential condition for addressing the issue. The problems in doing so, however, were recognized, along with many

other issues associated with racial profiling:

- Profiling is not taught in the police academies, nor is there any curriculum on profiling, so where and how officers learn to do so will be more difficult to address because it happens informally.
- People mask their discrimination through the use of proxies (e.g., language, immigration, race, etc.), and the common response is that the stop is not done on the basis of race but on the basis of greater criminality. This plays out throughout the system in prosecutors who decide how to charge, juries that determine guilt or innocence, and judges who impose sentences and punishments.
- Discrimination gets picked up by the media and transmitted to the community and the pernicious effects become even more ingrained, including self-imaging among children.
- Racial profiling cannot be solved on a case-by-case basis because there are always reasonable proxies available to explain the action. Therefore, it is impossible to prove racial profiling without data because it can only be revealed in patterns.
- Police unions traditionally resist data collection because it can be used to prove discrimination, but they need to be involved in changing attitudes and behavior.
- Collecting data is one thing, knowing what to do with it is quite another. There is a need for thoughtful analysis in interpreting the data. If, for instance, there are more stops of people of color than the numbers in a community might reflect, there is no way to measure how that compares to the people who drive through that community. Finger

“(racial profiling) is a problem that does not lend itself to a single one-time solution.”

pointing is not a solution.

- Collection of data without a discussion of policy would be a no-win situation for everyone.
- Collecting data on racial profiling is an integral arm of community policing.
- “The race of an officer does not make a good officer, but the diversity in the organization does make a good organization.”
- Racial profiling can be the beginning of a paper trail for many minority youth, and it can have significant consequences for them and their families in a state with a “three strikes” law.
- There is a sad irony, therefore, in the reality that traffic accidents are the number one killer of young African American males, yet we are afraid to encourage stopping young males because it would be used as a pretext for other issues in racial profiling.
- There is a need to emphasize respect for different communities as an important tool for policing.

The Commission discussion during the course of the meeting considered the role of elected officials, of government administration and police, of community organizations and their leaders, scholars, and of the Commission itself. There was a strong affirmation of the belief that racial profiling exists, that it is pernicious, and that data must be collected and appropriately analyzed. Among the points made during Commission discussion were the following:

- Elected officials must be made aware of the implications of racial profiling and ensure that their appointed law enforcement leaders

similarly grasp this sensitive and volatile issue. This responsibility rests, in the end, with elected mayors, county supervisors and the Governor.

- Community leaders also have a responsibility to meet with the police to solve complaints about racial profiling. This is not an issue that can be resolved without respectful and honest discussion in which all sides are engaged.
- Resolving concerns about racial profiling in the context of policing requires leadership and commitment from elected officials, police chiefs and their management staffs, those responsible for training, and communities. It will likely also require a serious examination of the incentive systems within policing organizations.
- There is a role for neutral outsiders to play in facilitating both the training and the analysis of data. Releasing raw data would be misleading and probably inflammatory. It is one of the major disincentives to collecting data in the first place, along with the cost. Knowing what to collect and how to analyze it, and doing so fairly, requires trained analytical skill.
- There are costs and benefits associated with collecting data, some of which society may be willing to bear, but some of which it may not.
- This is a problem that does not lend itself to a single one-time solution. It requires constant attention, effective, ongoing communication with the affected communities, and training for police officers and their leaders.

Conclusions

Policing is one of the most difficult jobs in a democratic society. It is the force of power on the front line. It protects the many, but it risks doing so at the expense of others. The infringement on the rights of minorities would be intolerable under any circumstances, but it has become even more so in California because of our “three strikes” law, which imposes increasingly serious punishments. As Geraldine Washington of the NAACP noted, being stopped “while driving black” can be the beginning of a criminal paper trail. It is not that the young African American or Latino man is more prone to have drugs, it is that he is more likely to be stopped and caught. The pernicious impact on him, his family, and the community is almost incalculable.

There is also the very serious call for protection that cannot be denied. The call is strongest in the communities that are the most vulnerable. The solution is not just in collecting data – itself a complex and sensitive task – but in developing the relationships between the police and the communities affected. There is a need for ongoing discussions. Effective community policing may be the key to the development of a more sensitive police force and better crime fighting.

Recommendations

Since the Commission hearing in May, the state Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law a bill that requires the collection of data on racial profiling. The bill, SB 1102, is an important first step toward combating the damaging consequences of racial profiling. While similar to the Commission’s recommendation when

it comes to analysis, it places the burden of analysis on the Legislative Analyst rather than a separate body. It requires analysis of the impact of the legislation, but does not require the engagement of the affected communities, nor neutral third parties, such as expert scholars, to help bridge the interests of the police and communities. The Commission, therefore, recommends the following:

- **Establish a Data Collection and Analysis Commission.** While 55 law enforcement agencies in California currently collect racial profiling data on a voluntary basis, these data are not standardized, nor is there a process or vehicle for objectively analyzing and interpreting the data to inform California policymakers. The Commission for One California recommends creating an independent commission to:

1. promulgate uniform standards for data collection;
2. conduct nonpartisan, objective analysis of data;
3. provide technical assistance to local communities to respond to findings; and to
4. implement a research program on the causes of and solutions to racial profiling.

The Data Collection and Analysis Commission would be composed of police chiefs, leaders from community and civil rights organizations, scholars and other key stakeholders, such as representatives from police unions. It could serve as a model for engaging all stakeholders in the objective resolution of an often heated and contentious issue.

- **Institute more courses on diversity awareness for both new recruits and current officers.** The state recently

instituted enhancements to the level and frequency of diversity training received by police officers, and the Commission would like to underscore the importance of this training. It is particularly important for members of the local community to have substantive input into the training of officers who serve in those communities, to ensure sensitivity to the unique populations and circumstances there. In addition, because 50% of California's police officers

are trained at community colleges, the Commission wants to go on record as supporting such diversity courses at these state-supported institutions.

- **Screen prospective officers for bias.** State law requires that every peace officer pass a psychological examination as a part of the hiring process. The state should investigate ways to identify discriminatory beliefs through such tests as a preventive measure.



Racial profiling is the use of race as a variable in an equation. There are examples of bad uses, such as redlining, or arguably good uses, such as affirmative action in university admissions.

CONCLUSION

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY, and the promise to every individual in it, must not be threatened by the fear of strangers. Yet, how difficult that seems to be. We know that racism is a learned response. It comes early. We believe that we can intervene to alter that response and encourage appreciation of diversity. We know that training can make a difference. If there is one lesson learned from the Commission's first year, it is that education and training are necessary conditions for a sensitive, diverse society. We must target several key points in our society's structure on a recurring basis because society is ever-changing and no institution or process can ensure absolute fairness and equality.

It is clear, for instance, that racial profiling, while most serious when it involves police activities, is not limited to them. Dr. Marvalene Hughes, a Commission member and president of California State University at Stanislaus, reported that she is inevitably stopped and searched at airports. Dr. Hughes is a middle-aged African American woman who dresses professionally and usually carries a briefcase, projecting the image of a successful businesswoman. Given the diverse nature of the Commission for One California, it was a subject with which most could resonate. The Commission's goal was to identify the points at which the inequities and indignities associated with discrimination of any kind can be addressed.

There is also the recognition that diversity is a value in and of itself because it recognizes one community made up of many communities. America was founded and grown on presumptions of being a community, even as we valued individual freedom. There is a longing for community that fuels every group, even those perceived

to be in the dominant group. There will be no homogenization of society, even though there are many things we all share. Just as we have placed individuality on a high pedestal – perhaps higher than any other nation – so, too, do we look for the ties that bind us, that are the basis of who we are as individuals. The desire for individual freedom to pursue the dream is connected to the desire to belong. It is a constant tension in American culture that defines us.

The long-range task of the Commission for One California is to consider the issues of governance in a diverse society. It is clear that we are not looking toward a world where one ethnicity dominates another, nor one class, nor bias of any sort. It is equally clear that achieving an equitable society depends on our ability to govern by consensus, and that achieving consensus requires engaging every voice in the process. It is a rather daunting goal, but it is the vision we must work toward and there is reason to believe it is a goal that most Californians share. While the Commission has focused on specific issues – and it will continue to do so – it recognizes that solving problems depends on our ability to talk to each other to find the voices that can express our pain and offer the necessary solutions. Leadership is called for at the state level, as it is at every level. Therein lies another problem: identifying those who can speak for their communities, and identifying and supporting the structures of leadership that will enable those who have the commitment to rise up as spokespeople for their communities and for society as a whole.



APPENDIX A: MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission is chaired by **The Honorable Cruz M. Bustamante**, the Lieutenant Governor of the State of California, and has the following members:

Sunil “Sunny” Aghi is president of the Indo-American Business Association. He is also the founder and president of the Indo-American Political Foundation. He founded Thank You America, an organization that coordinates an annual food drive for the homeless in Orange County. In addition, Mr. Aghi served on the California Board of Optometry.

David Bejarano, is the Chief of Police of the City of San Diego. He played a major role in the development of a Bi-National Task Force to address border violence. He was formally recognized at the federal and local levels for his efforts to reduce border violence and forge international law enforcement partnerships.

Rabbi Brad Bloom has been the religious leader of Sacramento’s Congregation B’nai Israel since 1955. B’nai Israel, founded in 1849, is the oldest Jewish congregation west of the Mississippi River. The congregation has been a repeated target of hate incidents since a June 1999 arson attack. Rabbi Bloom is the past president of Sacramento’s Interfaith Service Bureau.

Maha ElGenaidi is the Executive Director of the Islamic Networks Group in San Jose. She also serves as co-chair of the Bay Area Hate Crime Investigators Association, as a member of the POST Hate Crime Advisory Committee, and as a member of the Santa Clara County Anti-Hate Crime Network.

Dr. Janice Emerzian is District-Wide Director for Disabled Students Programs and Services at Fresno City College. Dr. Emerzian is the former director of Fresno County’s Welfare to

Work Neighborhood Centers and former program director for Fresno City College’s Disabled Students Programs and Services. She founded the Governor’s Youth Leadership Forum, the Guild for Handicapped Citizens and chaired the California Association of Post-secondary Educators of the Disabled. At Fresno City College, she established the first community college high technology center for the disabled and the first job placement program for the disabled. She is the daughter of one of the last survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

Morton L. Friedman, Esq. is senior partner in the law firm of Friedman, Collard, Owen, Cutter & Panneton. A former vice president of the California Trial Lawyers Association, he is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Mr. Friedman has served on the boards of numerous legal, civic and Jewish community organizations. He is a member of the National Board of Directors of the Anti-Defamation League, and an executive board member of the National Board of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

Lori Fujimoto is the past National Vice President for Public Affairs of the Japanese American Citizens League, the oldest national Asian/Pacific-American civil rights organization. She is currently the National Chair of the JACL Hate Crimes Task Force. She led a successful initiative to secure the final congressional appropriation for the redress of claims filed by the Japanese-American World War II internees. Through this effort, Congress appropriated funds to provide reparations and approve an apology to the final 220 former internees. She also serves on the Sacramento Hate Crimes Task Force.

Michael J. Gennaco, Esq. is with the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department in

the Office of Independent Review. He is a former assistant United States attorney for the Central District of California, and chief of the Civil Rights Division of the United States Attorney's Office in Los Angeles. In this capacity he oversaw all hate crimes, police abuse, slavery investigations and prosecutions in the seven county district. He serves as the federal criminal civil rights liaison for community and public interest groups and federal and local law enforcement agencies. Mr. Gennaco previously served as a trial attorney with the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division in Washington, DC.

Carole Hayashino serves as director of development for San Francisco State University, and as an adjunct professor, teaches the course "Concentration Camps, USA." She serves as vice chair of the Marin County Human Rights Commission and is president of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California.

Rabbi Marvin Hier is the dean and founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and its acclaimed Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. The Center has become one of the foremost Jewish human rights agencies in the world. Rabbi Hier is also the recipient of two Academy Awards for co-producing the documentary feature *The Long Way Home* (1999), and for co-producing *Genocide* (1981), a documentary on the Holocaust.

Dr. Marvalene Hughes is president of California State University, Stanislaus. She is national chair of the Women Presidents of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, national chair of the African American Presidents/Chancellors of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and a member of the Commission on Women in Higher

Education for the American Council on Education. Dr. Hughes has conducted research and published several scholarly articles and chapters on diversity. She speaks and consults internationally on the topic. Her numerous honors and awards recognize her community services and human rights emphasis.

Rev. Leonard Jackson is Associate Minister at the First African Methodist Episcopal Church, Los Angeles. A retired Army combat veteran, Reverend Jackson serves as Director of Community Outreach for FAME and serves on many boards of directors, including the Interfaith Alliance (of which he is vice chair) and Bread for the World (both in Washington, DC), the California Council of Churches, the Community Coalition for Substance Abuse and Treatment Mission, and Stop the Violence, Increase the Peace.

Herma Hill Kay, Esq. is the Barbara Nachtrieb Armstrong Professor of Law at Boalt Hall, the law school of the University of California, Berkeley. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a member of the council of the American Law Institute, a board member of the American Bar Foundation, and past president of the Association of American Law Schools. She was dean at Boalt Hall from 1992-2000.

Morris Kight is a board member of the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission. He helped found the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Center – the first in the United States, and is the founder of Christopher Street West.

The Honorable Clifford M. LaChappa has been tribal chairman of the Barona Band of Mission Indians since 1989; and he is currently in his third term on the Tribal Council. Chairman LaChappa

has led his tribe through a significant economic development expansion, which included the development of the Barona Casino. The casino employs more than 1,100 people.

Randolph F. Lowe is senior vice president and manager of the Corporate Employment and Diversity Division for Union Bank of California, where he is responsible for the bank's diversity programs. He previously served as Director of the Administration and Management Division of the United States Department of Labor.

John W. Mack has served as president of the Los Angeles Urban League since 1969. A leader in the 1960 student civil rights movement in Atlanta, he was co-founder and vice chair of the Committee on the Appeal for Human Rights. He serves as co-chair of the African-American Leadership Connection, is a member of the Los Angeles Educational Alliance for Restructuring Now (LEARN), and serves on the World Affairs Council Board and on the board of the Rand Graduate School. Mr. Mack has been recognized by many groups for his efforts to improve race relations, and he has been a leading police reform advocate in Los Angeles.

Cardinal Roger Mahoney was installed as the Archbishop of Los Angeles in 1985, after serving as the Bishop of Stockton. He was named a Cardinal Priest in 1991. He has been a professor of social work and the director of numerous Catholic social service agencies and boards. He is a very active member of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and has chaired several NCCB committees. Cardinal Mahoney serves as chair of the United States Catholic Conference's Domestic Policy Committee and of the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters. He previously served on the Federal Commission on Agricultural Workers and as a member

of the Los Angeles 2000 Committee. Cardinal Mahoney previously served as chair of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board.

Dr. Royal Morales spent several years as a distinguished lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he taught courses and wrote on the Filipino-American experience and Philippines-US relations and history. A former social worker, he was a prominent Filipino-American community leader in the state of California.

Rev. Cecil "Chip" Murray is the religious leader of the First AME Church, the oldest African-American congregation in Los Angeles. Dr. Murray has overseen its growth from a 300-person congregation to one with 16,000 members. Under his leadership, First AME Church provides housing for the physically handicapped and the homeless, runs a multimillion-dollar micro-loan program, an innovative bone marrow donor program and a \$10 million venture capital fund.

Gregory Nava is a writer/producer and the head of El Norte Productions, a company he founded to produce and direct Latino-themed films. His credits include *El Norte* (nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay), *A Time for Destiny*, *My Family/Mi Familia*, *Selena* and *Why Do Fools Fall in Love*.

Lester Olmstead-Rose is the former Executive Director of Community United Against Violence (CUAV). CUAV addresses issues of violence in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities. He is also the co-chair of the Intergroup Clearinghouse, and served four years on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Advisory Committee to the San Francisco Human Rights Commission.

Michelle Pannor is an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley in her senior year. She has served on numerous boards and commissions at UC Berkeley, including the Committee on Student Fees, the Chancellor's Exploratory Committee on Continuous Improvement, and as chair of the Hiring Committee of the University Students' Cooperative Association Cabinet. She chaired the Student Advisory Committee for the Vice Chancellor of Undergraduate Affairs and also acted as an advisory member to the University Parking and Transportation Board, the College of Natural Resources Panel, and the Berkeley Master Planning Committee. She was appointed by the UC Regents as the Student Regent for a one-year term beginning July 1, 1999.

The Honorable Cruz Reynoso is a professor of law at the University of California, Davis School of Law and Special Counsel to the law firm of Kaye, Scholer, Fierman, Hays and Handler. A former Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court, Mr. Reynoso serves as the Vice-Chair of the United States Commission on Civil Rights. He is a former chair of the California Post-Secondary Education Commission and previously served as a US delegate to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. He was awarded the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor, by President Clinton in 2000.

Constance L. Rice is a partner in the Los Angeles firm of English, Munger & Rice. She is also co-founder and co-director of the Advancement Project, a resource organization for people working to solve public policy problems across lines of race, ethnicity and culture. Rice also serves on the Advisory Board of the Public Policy Institute of California. She was

formerly Western Regional Counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. In 1998, California Law Business named her one of California's top 100 lawyers. She also served as president of the Board of Commissioners of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

Morris L. "Vern" Roberts is the president of the board of directors for Southern California Rehabilitation Services, Inc. (SCRS), an organization designed to empower persons with disabilities and senior citizens with the knowledge, skill and confidence needed to achieve full participation in the community. He is also on the staff (vocational rehabilitation technician) at Rancho Los Amigos Rehabilitation Center in Downey, California.

Dr. Leland Saito is associate professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, San Diego. He is the author of numerous articles and has contributed chapters to a number of books on ethnic politics in California and New York City. He is also the author of *Race and Politics: Asian-Americans, Latinos and Whites in a Los Angeles Suburb*. He is the co-founder of the Southwest Center for Asian Pacific American Law (SCAPAL), located in San Diego.

Dr. Kevin Starr is the State Librarian of California. He is the author of numerous articles, essays and books on a variety of subjects and is a noted scholar on California history. His books include *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915*; *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era*; *Over California*; *Endangered Dreams: the Great Depression in California*; and *The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940s*.

Jill R. Tregor has served as the executive director of the Intergroup Clearinghouse since 1993. This San Francisco-

based organization works to bring diverse community-based and public agencies together to design and implement strategies to prevent, monitor and respond to hate violence. She is the former program director of Community United Against Violence and has worked with the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to develop a model training program for law enforcement on working with the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. She has spoken nationally on the issue of hate-motivated violence.

Eleni Tsakopoulos is the president of AKT Development Corporation. She has served on numerous civic and community boards, including the Sacramento Chamber of Commerce, Habitat for Humanity and the Sacramento Theater Company. She currently sits on the Board of Directors of the University of California's MIND Institute and the Vyronis Center for the Study of Hellenism. She is also a member of California's World Trade Commission.

Howard Welinsky is Senior Vice President of Administration for Warner Brothers Distributing. He serves on the UCLA Foundation Board of Governors and formerly served on the Board of the UCLA Alumni Association. Mr. Welinsky serves on the

Executive Committee of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and in 1995 was the recipient of their Lawrence J. Weinberg Distinguished Service Award. Mr. Welinsky serves as vice president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, as the chair of the Los Angeles Community Relations Committee, and as vice chair of the Jewish Public Affairs Committee. Mr. Welinsky also sits, or has sat, on the boards of numerous community, civic and nonprofit organizations, including the American Jewish Congress and the Center for Health Care Rights.

Dr. Jesse Wilson is senior pastor of the Kansas Avenue Seventh Day Adventist Church in Riverside. He serves as chairman of the Tyesha Miller Steering Committee and is active in many civic and religious organizations.

Steven N. Zipperstein, Esq. is assistant vice president and associate general counsel for Verizon. He is the former Chief Assistant United States Attorney in Los Angeles, and an adjunct professor of federal and international criminal law at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles.

Xandra Kayden is the Commission's former Executive Director and author of this report.



APPENDIX B: TOWARD A DEFINITION OF DIVERSITY

WHAT makes America different from all other nations is the core belief that the nation is based on egalitarian notions of class and religious tolerance. There are other attributes that make the United States exceptional: a commitment to liberty; individualism; populism; and laissez-faire attitudes toward commerce, according to political scientist and sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset. Anyone who accepts these views – whether born here or coming from abroad – can become an American⁶. Our openness to others is almost unique among the nations of the world, who usually determine citizenship on family origin, and who rarely take others in as easily as we do. Our aspirations as a culture, however, are not always met in reality. We have a long history of intolerance on many fronts, even as we struggle against it. While discrimination against newcomers, or discrimination based on race and ethnicity are the most often cited, we have also come to recognize that stereotypes and hostility toward any set of characteristics that are used to define individuals – gender, sexual preference, disability – is counter to our aspirations as a society.

One approach in the struggle for equality in the early part of the 20th Century was to promote the notion of the nation as a “melting pot.” When that failed to describe us, the term “salad bowl” was used to explain a society of different communities living together, still retaining their separate ways. Toward the end of the century, the struggle for equality made a value of the struggle in itself, finding identity in membership in minority communities. The young, particularly, defined themselves in the context of their ethnic communities toward the end of the 20th Century, but there are

limits to that approach as well. “Ethnicity” – sometimes a code word for race – was almost always used to describe a minority group, a group other than the dominant white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant culture. Lately, we have taken up the term “diversity” as a way to describe many communities living together, without the domination of any one of them. That is clearly the way of the future, but there are other elements of the discussion that need to be explored before we can expect a truly equitable and diverse society.

The historical relationship between black and white America, while so painfully built into our cultural psyche, may be less relevant today in California, particularly, because there are so many “others.” While the black/white struggle remains a defining part of the American cultural fabric, it does not quite resonate the same way in California, partly because the state was usually considered one of the best states for African-Americans, and partly because there have always been other races here. Still, slavery and all that followed created a chasm that is hard to bridge. It defined the dominant white society just as surely as it defined the minority African-American society. Other groups in different parts of the country faced discrimination at different times as their numbers threatened the local majority: the Irish in Boston in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries; Jews in many parts of the nation until the latter half of the 20th century; Puerto Ricans in New York; Mexicans in Texas and California; and Asians – both Chinese and Japanese, particularly – on the West Coast. African-Americans bore the greatest brunt of racism and carried the call for equality with the dream America held in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

6. Seymour Martin Lipset.
American Exceptionalism
(New York: Norton, 1996)

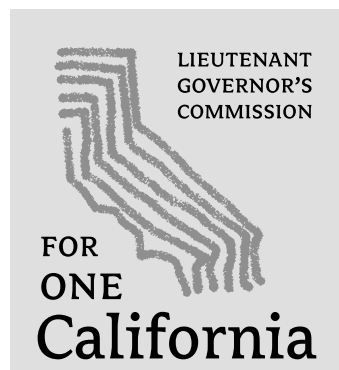
The lines of majority and minority status are not so clearly drawn today. The numbers tell part of the story, but the story has changed to a struggle, not so much for domination – or the escape from domination – as a competition among many for a place at the table. Each group – whether defined by ethnicity or religion, or other characteristics such as gender, sexual preference or disability – still needs to make a point of engaging the rest of us. We do not automatically see the commonalties between us and recognize the right of everyone to a fair share of the “American pie.”

Going into the 21st Century, America is a diverse society and California is in the vanguard of that diversity. We share cultural threads from almost every nation, and we share them without stigma in many instances. While the PPIC study suggests a surprising degree of acceptance about the idea of diversity and recognition that the population is changing, most of us live in relative segregation. Typically, we are much more familiar with Indian or Japanese food than the Indian or Japanese people among us. While the fabric of diversity may be more tightly woven in the center, the threads separate at the edges where each community lives in relative isolation from every other community. There is hope that we will get to know each other despite the structures of our society and economy, which keep most of us bound fairly tightly into the ethnic communities from which we come; but it will take attention and sensitivity from many different sectors of our society to make a difference.

One fundamental question is how much should be retained of individual and community identity and how much can be shared. How evenly can such “cross-fertilization” occur? Mexicans who became Mexican-Americans may define themselves more as Mexicans in the context of America, and more as Americans in the context of Mexico. But they have created a new culture, drawing strands from both nations, building on interactions with a world of many different nations. It is likely that intermarriage among so many different worlds will change identities even more as generations of immigrants give birth to third and fourth generation Americans.

The goal of the Commission for One California is to recognize one culture out of the diversity of the human experience. It assumes both the weaving together of those strands and the capacity of each strand to carry its own color and texture. It assumes that the pattern is a new society that can and will retain ties to other nations and the diversity of the human experience. The capacity to project a fair and equitable society will very likely have an impact on our culture and economy. Achieving that goal depends on the capacity of the structure (the “loom” in a weaving analogy) to be strong, clearly-defined, and flexible. It is the public sphere: politics, government, and other public institutions that serve as such a loom, even as they are torn by competing demands.





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